1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

to which she had belonged before her marriage, and in particular sent some of her children to her parents to be cared for until adolescence. In this way a web of affinal ties was built up, cutting across both the residential and age-set systems and acting against the fissile tendencies in the former.[47]

The ties that bound a man to his age-mates and to his matrilateral kin cut across those linking him to his lord and to his dependants. Nevertheless, it seems probable that even without this arrangement of cross-cutting ties, the segmentary system itself was not easily fissile. The State as a whole was primarily held together by its enemies, the external enemies who made it unsafe for small bodies of Ngoni to venture across the no-man's-land on their own, and the internal rivals who competed for the Paramount Chief's favour and who bided their time until they could lead off their major segments as independent states. The flexibility of the system allowed men to achieve power within it, and provided a way of balancing the interests of different groups, as well as making possible the few instances of fission that did occur. The Paramount Chief was powerful, not only because of his mystical attributes and of the military successes of his people, but because he was the government. Through him the common interests of the tribe as a whole were expressed in an organized manner as against the interests of minority groups. Despite its segmentary form, Ngoni society was a State.

In later years two changes took place which increased the stability of the State, at least from a short-term point of view. In the first place, the external environment altered due to the penetration into the central African hinterland by Arabs, Portuguese and British. With this topic we shall deal in Chapter III. The second change, which seems to have taken place among the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, was in the internal organization of the State. In that particular group, neighbouring tribes were brought under subjection as political groups, not as individuals, and the conquered peoples were either allowed to retain their own chiefs as subordinate rulers or else were attached in large batches to various important headquarters. A distinction emerged between the aristocracy and the conquered peoples, and the army was no longer simply the aggregation of age-sets but included quasi-professionals supplied by a near-by unconquered Cewa chief Mwase Kasungu, who were armed with guns. Similar changes may well have taken place among the Ngoni groups in Tanganyika, who were more closely involved with the slave trade to the coast

[47] See the discussion of affinal linking in my *Marriage*, pp. 10-11.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

choice and variety of food, was primarily to please him, and to meet the incessant claims on his hospitality when visitors came. A well-ordered and harmonious household also pleased him, and conversely the sounds of women quarrelling angered him and violated his canons of accepted Ngoni behaviour. It was his wife's task to supervise the household helpers, who were mostly non-Ngoni, and to make them conform to Ngoni patterns by controlling their rages, instead of yelling at each other and hurling accusations of witchcraft at those with whom they were angry.

Ngoni women also took a serious view of another aspect of pleasing their husbands, namely attention to their person and dress. The old elaborate hair-dressing of Ngoni women, the scrupulous washing of their bodies with sweet-smelling leaves, the use of oil and clarified butter on the skin and hair, and the careful tying and draping of cloths and arranging of bead headbands and necklaces—these all were forms of beauty treatment and personal hygiene designed to please the husband. They also reinforced the self-respect and authority of well-born Ngoni women, marking them out by their well-groomed appearance from the 'workers' and 'helpers' who surrounded them.

The young Ngoni child, up to the age of six or seven, grew up in a women's world of the kind just described. His mother was learning from his paternal grandmother the increasing duties and responsibilities of an Ngoni wife, although she was supposed to have learned some of them in her own home from her mother before marriage. We saw in Chapter II how the social horizons of a small Ngoni child were never of a narrow type, restricted to his individual family. The care of a child, especially between the time of weaning and the coming of second teeth, was the concern of a number of women in addition to his own mother, from whom he was snatched away at weaning, and, for a time at least, kept away from her household for eating and sleeping.

Among the female population of a village most nearly

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters, children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy and therefore to be removed from them when the time came for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with him, they sometimes carried him about while the nurse girl did something else, they ground bulrush millet or roasted ground-nuts to give him as snacks. They were particularly concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the right names for things, to use the correct terms for older people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their singing games.

Above this sister group in age came his own mother and his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he addressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some measure of the authority which his father and his father's brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

The same triple grouping by age and generation, which the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and grandmother's households. There were young children who were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

women helpers of his mother's age, one or two of whom had come with her at her marriage to attend her, and who themselves had married in her new village. Above them again were the older women helpers of his grandmother's generation, themselves grandmothers, whom he addressed as 'grandmother', as he did his own grandparents.

There were other sets of people whom the young child saw less often. When he visited his mother's relatives in her old home, he enjoyed all the allurement a child feels for living in a different place among people who want to gratify his every wish. Sometimes the maternal relatives visited the child's home, but then their relationship with him was on more formal terms. They did not dare for example to give him titbits in private, or to pet him, or even to correct him, lest his father's relatives might notice and remind them: 'This is *our* child.'

Other strangers came and went all the time, and the child learned to distinguish between the village inhabitants and those he, and others, designated as 'strangers'. He saw mostly the women who were entertained in the compound of his grandmother. He was sometimes taken by his mother when she went to greet strangers by the big house, and he learned early that he was not expected to make a noise or call attention to himself in the presence of these strangers.

In this women's world the higher age-group in each status group, that is of relatives and helpers, carried the chief authority, gave orders, and rebuked all below them for breaches of etiquette or failure to carry out commands. For the small child, the whole superstructure of authority in the women's world built round his daily life a sense of security, partly because it was so ordered and so little variable. When the Ngoni said, 'A child belongs to all the village. They can all cherish him and correct him,' they really meant this women's world, organized through the households and the families and the houses. The child's needs for food and sleep, washing and warmth, care when sick, were taken care of

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

855 primarily within his mother's household, but also, and especially immediately after weaning, in his grandmother's household. His needs for food and warmth could in fact be met in any of the households which formed part of his father's house and family group. There was no greater contrast for the small boy about the age of seven between this kind of life in the women's compound and his plunge into the life of the boys' dormitory.

The father's role with young children

562 During day-time in Ngoni villages Ngoni men and women lived almost in two separate worlds, the women in their compounds, the men by the kraal gate or about the village. When important visitors arrived the veranda of the 'big house' became a general meeting-place. Chiefs and leading men who [342] had acquired chairs, among other modern household furni- [177] ture, preferred to entertain their guests on their own veranda [352] where they had some degree of privacy, and to offer them chairs to sit on instead of the kraal fence to lean against. This use of chairs which they found more comfortable to sit on brought many of the fathers of families back to their own verandas now and then during the day, though they continued to eat their meals with the other men at the kraal gate, and to go there to discuss village affairs and watch over the coming and going of the cattle.

574 512 [264] [521]

593 This change of habit brought the fathers of families into closer touch with their young children, and it was accelerated by the growing Christian tradition in which fathers were more closely associated with certain aspects of their children's upbringing. It was the father who arranged for the baptism of the children which took place in the local church and was a ceremony attended by most of the village, whether Christians or not. When an evangelist or a school-teacher conducted evening prayers, as they often did near the kraal where anyone could come after the evening meal, Christian fathers sometimes carried a child in their arms to the prayers.

[177] [851] [782]

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

858 867 signs of irritation at female control, especially with this prohibition on going to the kraal gate. They escaped surveillance and ran off there now and then, only to be caught by one of the men, beaten and brought back to the compound with the remark: 'This child is not yet a herd boy. Keep him with you.'

If the village was near a roadway with traffic on it, or near a river, children were forbidden to go there without some older person with them. They were also warned not to go near fireplaces in case a burning log fell out, and to keep away from the woodpile where there might be snakes.

Training in habits

● 855 In these surroundings, diversified, orderly, and on the whole safe if forbidden places were avoided, young children's needs were attended to and they were gradually trained to look after themselves. For food, health and sleep, their primary physical needs, they had their older sisters, nurse girls, mothers, grandmothers and helpers all at hand to ensure that these needs were satisfied.

264 962 After the post-weaning months were over, and generally though not always after the next baby was born, a young child went back to eat with his mother in her compound and sleep in her hut, though a grandmother, if she had taken a special fancy to a child, might say she was going to keep him to eat and sleep with her. In his mother's compound twice a day the child watched her and her helpers preparing and cooking a meal. In due time he was called to the veranda where the food lay smoking, his hands were wiped, he was made to rinse out his mouth, and he sat down beside his mother or his nurse in a circle round the food basket. This contained the mash of cooked grain, usually maize, and beside it were the little pots of cooked 'relish', beans, peas, [262] green vegetables, tomatoes, ground-nuts. At first someone pinched up a little lump of the mash, dipped it in a relish, and popped it into his mouth, telling him to shut his mouth and chew before he swallowed. Later he learned to do this

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

himself, with his eyes rather anxiously on the elders, lest he should take too large a lump, or get the relish all over his hand and wrist instead of only on his finger-tips. He learned, however hungry he was, not to stuff himself, and not to eat noisily. If he smacked his lips and gulped audibly, someone in the circle might say: 'I hear the guns of the Tyandla people booming.' They all stopped eating and looked at him, and he learned that a proverb could be a veiled rebuke, and he hung his head, ashamed.

Sometimes the smaller children had cow's milk or curds and whey or thin gruel given to them in a tiny gourd between the main meal-times, and through the day nurse girls and older sisters gave them little snacks if they thought of it or if the child whimpered because it was hungry. A favourite snack was ground bulrush millet, creamy and nutty to taste. Throughout this period spent in the women's world the child did not lack food either at or between meals. As he grew more mobile and independent, he went foraging in the compounds of his other mothers and his grandmothers, especially if his own mother had gone to her garden. They always welcomed him and gave him something to go on with.

After set meals the child was made to rinse his mouth, and his hands were cleaned by his nurse girl and his face and chest washed if he had covered himself with food fragments. His nurse girl found him a 'tooth-brush twig' and frayed it for him, and taught him to use it after meals as well as in the early morning.

Washing of small children was always done in the compound. While some children squirmed and yelled when washed, others liked it. They sat grinning on the veranda while their mother or nurse splashed water over them, rubbed soapy leaves on their hair, dried them with a cloth, and rubbed cow's fat on their skin. The Ngoni children in well-ordered households shone with cleanliness till they were about six years old. Then the boys dodged these female attentions, their skin became dry and scruffy, and their hair full

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of cloth hanging in front from a bead or grass waistband. They were all taught before that age, and most stringently after it, to sit correctly. For the little girls, this meant kneeling first and then sitting with the legs tucked on one side. They always smoothed down their scrap of cloth so that their genitals were covered. Little boys often squatted, sitting on their heels. Their correct position however, especially when eating food, was to sit with their legs crossed and the soles of their feet pressed against their thighs, and their cloth or skin apron arranged to cover their genitals.

Any rudeness in speech or action towards parents or elders was corrected at once, and the child was told: 'That is not the Ngoni way.' Studied courtesy included looking down when addressed by an elder, and as we saw in Chapter II, never walking behind a group of elders but passing in front of them, bending slightly forward and murmuring: 'I am before your eyes.'

Play places and playthings

In spite of what appeared like a somewhat restrictive régime, Ngoni children were merry and busy all their waking hours. Occasionally lack of health, or an awkward temperament, produced a child who sat around by himself, or glowered at other children, or was spiteful and vindictive. For the most part their nurse girls and older sisters paid them the attention they demanded, were always ready to provide distractions and amusements, and showed them how to use all that lay around them as playthings.

The places where they played depended on their age and mobility. The youngest children stayed round the hut and inside the fence. Occasionally the nurse girls and older sisters in the afternoons took them to a 'playground' on the outskirts of the village, where the older girls were accustomed to meet and practise dancing, or to thread beads and chatter. When the harvest was in, some of the older children about five and six years old, helped by the nurse girls, made 'play

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHERS

Young Ngoni children among their siblings and age-mates

593 955 The hard-worked theme of sibling rivalry among small children in a family was not obvious among young Ngoni children. I expected to see outbursts of jealousy when the ex-baby returned after weaning to his mother's compound and found another baby installed there. But even with the new baby present, the mother seemed to have time to pet the ex-baby, telling the nurse girl to leave him with her, and there were few overt signs of emotional tension. This was certainly due to a large extent to the nurse-girl pattern, the fenced compound which was the child's home, and the interest of older sisters in their younger brothers and sisters. Young children growing up, as we have seen, were the focus of attention for a group of girls and women of different ages. They were hardly ever in a situation in which they had to struggle to assert themselves against a sibling, or, in their early years, against their age-mates. If they felt slighted or miserable or hungry or tired they could always go to someone to be petted or fed.

Hence their emotional needs for affection and attention never seemed to be unsatisfied. They were accustomed to having their physical needs supplied by any one of several women, and did not depend only on their mother for these needs. Nurse girls and older sisters were often demonstrative to small children, and they got more actual petting from them than from their mother or grandmother. Young children in turn often petted one smaller than themselves, or a new baby, and there was a contented affectionate relationship between children in the home which indicated the absence of any acute sibling rivalry.

857 561 From about the age of five or six, boys, who were escaping from the restrictions and security of the compound to the freedom and competition of village life, found a new challenge in a large group of their own age-mates, also just coming out of the younger child seclusion of the home. Boys

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

or thirteen, the girls began to take part in *ngoma* dances with the boys. This was on a village basis and organized with a view to competition with other villages. In practising such dancing, as we shall see later, the girls were often by themselves, though when getting ready for a competition they joined with the boys' group.

The Ngoni girls' circle was to some extent split into the households to which the girls belonged. There was no common residence or common eating-place for all the group, to correspond with the boys' dormitory and eating together at the kraal gate. Generally the girls continued to eat in their mothers' compound with their own younger brothers and sisters. They sometimes ate with the widowed aunt or grandmother with whom they slept, but the other practice was more common. This meant that Ngoni girls who bore the clan name of their father continued to live in the compound of their mother who might not be of a high-ranking Ngoni clan. In such cases the grandmother and the father's elder sister kept a sharp eye on the training and deportment of the girl.

The Ngoni girls' circle was an exclusive group. Unlike the dormitory where all village boys mixed up, the Ngoni girls, in virtue of bearing their father's clan name, tended to remain as a distinctive group. They were members of their father's house until they married; and when that took place it was they who could cause cattle to flow into the herd belonging to that house. It was partly for this reason, the transfer of cattle, that the Ngoni women of that house, particularly the grandmother, watched closely the bringing up of the girls from the second teeth stage onward. If she thought the training of the girl was unsatisfactory, because of the carelessness or doubtful character of the girl's own mother, the grandmother might discuss with the girl's father the advisability of arranging for the girl to be adopted into another household or into a collateral house. The reason for this was that when marriage negotiations began and the prospective parents-in-law made inquiries about the girl's character and

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

upbringing, they would be unwilling to consider an alliance if the girl's mother were known to be a doubtful character or a careless housewife. The girl's prospects in marriage depended not only on her own reputation and character, but on the household milieu in which she was known to have grown up.

The Ngoni girls in this circle were not only an exclusive group. They were a carefully guarded and protected one. The surveillance of the grandmother, as the woman head of the girl's father's house, was dominant. Besides watching to see if the girl's home was proving a satisfactory training ground, she chose a 'companion' or 'attendant' for the girl, to take the place of the nurse girl. She was a little older than the Ngoni girl, but near enough in age to enjoy and enter into all her occupations and amusements. This companion, chosen from among the helpers in the grandmother's household, grew up with the Ngoni girl, waited on her to some extent, went everywhere with her, slept in the same hut and ate in the same household.

In her daily life in the village an Ngoni girl had in her circle all those whom she called 'sisters' and their companions. There was one exception to the exclusiveness of this group, and that was the school. Many Ngoni fathers who decided that school was a good thing for their boys, decided that it would also be wise to send their girls to school, especially if they showed signs of exceptional ability and leadership. This was sometimes carried through in the teeth of opposition from the grandmother, but the father usually won the day. For Ngoni girls school was an escape from the relative dullness and monotony of compound life, as also from the continual surveillance which became stricter as they grew older and entered the immature girls' group. The Ngoni girls enjoyed mixing with boys, being taught by men, learning to read and write, hearing Bible stories. The daughters of Ngoni chiefs and heads of leading clans were easily distinguishable in the schools by their controlled and dignified behaviour in class and in the playground. They were not

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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made with the approval of the dead man's kin. Although by this arrangement the woman was for a while removed from her allotted place in the system, the *status quo ante* was restored with the return of the children to their pater's kinsmen.

8. Segmentation

The primary cleavage among a man's children was between the children of one band and the children of another. Within a band, the division was into separate 'houses'. Where there were children of more than one mother in the same 'house', that is where the senior wife as well as the linked wife had borne children or where there was more than one fertile linked co-wife with the same senior, the division was between the groups of full siblings. These lines of cleavage were expressed spatially by the arrangements of the huts belonging to each segment. At the top of the political hierarchy, the arrangement of the Paramount Chief's queens determined the major divisions into which the nation was split residentially, with a senior queen in charge of each major royal village, and lesser queens in charge of politically dependent royal villages. At the bottom, the man with two or three wives saw his sons group themselves round their mothers while retaining a common allegience to him.

Thus we see that in 'the time of peace' marriage was tied to a clear-cut residential system based on patrilineal descent and virilocal residence, modified by political status deriving ultimately from the Paramount Chief. The position of males in this system was determinate, although not unalterable. By the processes of marriage males were supplied with legitimate offspring. Although descent and succession were traced through males, the pattern of segmentation of this patrilineal system was determined by the organization of wives. The relative status of co-wives was perpetuated in the relationship between the segments which sprang from them.

In this system the elementary family of man, wife, and children did not emerge as an important grouping. In all serious enterprises a person derived support from his male agnates, and it was to the organized kin that the fertility of the woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth. By the time a man had advanced in status sufficiently to be head of a division or a village, he had acquired many dependants who were not true kinsmen and his wives had been divided into bands. With the recently captured families, these considerations did not apply with quite the same force, for there were many poor men who had only one wife. These people depended on their political superior for cattle, and the women were to some extent under the control of his great wife, in so far as agricultural work and beer brewing were concerned. Even the rearing of children once they had been weaned was carried on outside the elementary family. Children were sent to their grandmother's house to be trained and indoctrinated with Ngoni values. The recent captives

4: Barnes, E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

sent their children to one of the senior wives of their captor. Husband, wife, and unweaned child slept together in the same hut, but their waking lives were spent in association with other and different groups of people.

In view of what has happened in modern times, we must draw attention to two features of the residential system which were not, at that time, directly related to the processes of marriage. A man lived where he belonged politically, and the residential system was an integral part of the political organization of the state. A man's place in it was determined by birth, and could not be altered except by the intervention of his political superiors. He could not change his political affiliation merely by going to live in another village or division or cluster, while if he received political promotion, or if his segment was punished by the State, the change of status was sometimes accompanied by change of residence. Secondly, choice within the system was expressed by hiving-off, not by moving about. The variable factor within any segment was the extent to which the potential cleavages within it were made actual cleavages. A man decided whether he would continue to live in the same cluster or division as his elder brother and depend on the common herd, or whether he would establish his own cluster with its own herd and own spatial identity. He did not have to decide whether he would continue to attach himself to one lieutenant or royal headquarters or whether he would transfer his allegiance to another. In this he had no choice. Choice lay in the extent of segmentation, not in the location of allegiance. We shall see that changes in these features in the residential system have in recent times been related to changes in marriage.

Marriage in 'the time of peace' was essentially a means by which agnatic segments, unable by the fact of exogamy to produce their own children, were provided with child-bearers from outside the segment. A woman was associated as a child-bearer with a definite point in her husband's agnatic segment, and this association was permanent. The biological determinants of child-rearing strengthened the permanence of the association. To bear a child for her husband's agnatic segment, in any system of this general type, a woman must be associated with it for three years or more, from conception to weaning; and as one child is weaned, the next is on the way. One man can beget children for his agnatic line by many wives at the same time, but a woman can produce for only one husband at a time. Thus while it is possible to maintain stable exogamous matrilineal groupings without fixing permanently the reproductive powers of men, agnatic exogamous groupings, if they are to persist in time, must be supplied with permanent sources of fertility from outside. The old Ngoni marriage system did this. We shall see that nowadays both the permanent transfer of fertility and the persisting agnatic groupings have disappeared.

[P.58]

CHAPTER IV

KINSFOLK, AFFINES AND NEIGHBOURS

1. The setting of marriage

[581] [602] WHEN a man marries he acquires not only a wife but also affinal relatives. His kinsfolk become her affines and both groups of relatives become kin of the children of the marriage. Husband and wife do not exist in isolation but are the centre of a network of relationships by which one group is articulated with the other. The common interest of the two groups is in the well-being of the couple and of the family which they found. This is true of all societies but among the Ngoni the relatives of a married couple play a more important part in the marriage than they do, for example, in Western society. The importance of the kin is increased by the custom of sending children away to live with their grandparents as soon as they have been weaned, and by the fact that husband and [591] wife do not set up their residence entirely on their own but follow their relatives and live in close proximity to one or more of them. We have said that in the old days the elementary family did not emerge as an important grouping in society. This proposition is still true to-day, although our grounds for making it have shifted somewhat. In the towns the old pattern of kinship cannot operate and husband [594] and wife live their lives much more as an isolated pair, cut off from their kin and alone responsible for their children. But in villages neighbours are kinsmen and a quarrel between man and wife brings kinsfolk from all around seeking to establish the rights and wrongs of the quarrel and to effect reconciliation. Many children are not sent to live with their grandparents, but even they grow up with their age-mates in the village, are fed by many different women, sleep in [855] different huts, and visit to and fro with their relatives in other villages. The difficulties of rearing children in the towns have led to the rise of a new pattern in which children born in Southern Rhodesia are brought back hundreds of miles to the village to be cared for by rural kinsfolk. The quarrels of spouses in the towns are referred home to the village for discussion.

It is the kinsfolk of the pair who are most directly concerned with their marriage, but there are other persons and groups who are also interested. In the village the headman and his lieutenants, even if they are not close kinsmen of one of the spouses, have an interest in the good behaviour of the couple, and they too may intervene in a quarrel. They participate in the ceremonials of marriage, and may receive part of the meat and beer given by one side to the other. 000 Beyond the village the Native Courts deal to a great extent with

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4

of maternal ties, the cleavage between sets of father's children is an expression more of their different matrilateral affiliations than of the different status of their mothers. A child will be sent to its own mother's mother rather than to its father's wife's mother, although some children do go to the latter. Samuel's children by his first and third wives [3] were reared by their father's fourth wife's mother, but they maintain contact with their own mothers' relatives.

These particular structural changes have taken place without any great conflict of values. It would appear that although polygyny was an essential feature of the old system, there was no idea that it was wrong to remain monogamous. Indeed in any community with a normal sex ratio, the majority of men must be monogamists and it is not surprising that monogamy is tolerated however much polygyny is the goal of ambitious men. Among the Ngoni the decline in polygyny over the last fifty years has not outraged traditional values. In like manner, we have seen that traditionally a man's mother and his wife's mother should share the rearing of his children. This division is in accord with the statement made frequently by aristocratic Ngoni that when distributing gifts a man ought not to favour his own parents more than his wife's. Both these injunctions indicate that even in 'the time of peace', however clearly a man's children by a wife for whom he had paid bridewealth belonged to his group and not to hers, the claims of a wife's kinsfolk and their interest in the children of the marriage were recognized. Ngoni say that children ought to live in their father's village, but this is a statement of the same order as the oft-reiterated remark that the Ngoni pay bridewealth. Ngoni make these statements because these are part of the index of their tribal identity, not because they have observed them to be true. The facility with which married couples live uxorilocally is no doubt partly due to the influence of the matrilineal uxorilocal Cewa and other tribes, but we cannot regard this as the only operative factor.

4. The moral significance of sexual activity

In the treatment of sexual activity in girls there does appear to be a certain moral dilemma. We have observed that the Cewa believed that a girl who did not copulate at puberty would die, and that the Ngoni held that a girl should be chaste until she was married, which was some time after puberty. The seclusion of girls was, and is, a matter arranged by women and one in which men have very little say. It may be on this account that the Cewa view has largely prevailed, for the Ngoni took many women captives and in the early stages of the migration from Natal there seem to have been more Ngoni men than women. The women were not so carefully indoctrinated into the Ngoni way of life as were men captives, for the women's regimental system was never as highly

[3] See above, p. 109

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Maravi FR4
Ngoni FR5
Bemba FQ5

M 301 Necklaces, most commonly for children, are made of a number of little square pieces of hippo ivory strung together, ornamented with geometrical designs.

M 789 Medicine is often carried in a little packet suspended round the neck, as also charms of various kinds. The medicine may be some powdered charred roots or little twigs, leaves, etc., of some tree; these are sometimes now wrapped up in a Y [789] piece of paper on which is written some extract from the Koran (among Mohammedan Yao); this is then sewn in a little piece of calico and adorned with beads and suspended round the neck with a string.

Charms take various forms. Small pieces of wood or, to guard against attack M 301 by lion, teeth are worn. Armlets of the same kind are worn against sickness, and others are worn by Angoni, made of beads to which knives are attached. Bracelets of ivory, plaited grass and elephant tail hairs are also worn.

N 301 Metal and wirework bracelets are commonly worn by Angoni, also twisted wire finger rings and rings of lead and ivory. Heavy brass ankle rings and spiral brass leg and arm rings 6 inches and 8 inches wide are worn by some of the women (Atonga).

B 301 Bracelets cut from the nail of the elephant's foot are worn by Awemba hunters, and little finger rings cut from the scale of the ant-eater are worn as medicine against fever by headmen.

Belts made of wound copper wire are worn round the waists by Wankonde.

M 302 The use of pigments applied to the body is very limited. I have seen stripes of these, white and red, on the faces of young women, boys and dancers, generally M after some ceremony. The significance I do not know. Pigments are now obtained [439] from Indian traders, and I do not know how old the custom is. There is no beautification of face, body, nails, and eyes by pigments. The only application made to the skin is castor and ground-nut oils to keep it soft—no scents are used.

CLOTHING.

M Y ●N 291 Among tribes of Nyasaland the amount of clothing worn varies very considerably from nothing to European garments.

Of the large majority, however, including Maßanja people, Yao and Angoni, one may speak generally.

●[855] The young children commonly run about naked, or have a strip of cloth covering the pudenda, supported by a string round the waist.

M Y N [556] Among the adult population the amount of clothing depends largely on the affluence of the individual, and those who cannot afford much have little clothing. A man wears a strip of calico supported in front and behind by a string round the waist, a woman a piece of calico 18 inches wide reaching from the middle of the thighs to the umbilicus.

Of the more prosperous, the men wear calico from a little below the knee to the waist, carefully wrapped round the body, and kept in position by some kind of belt; sometimes it is folded across the upper part of the chest or sometimes crossed over in front and two ends tied behind the neck.